

PROJECT I.D. 1154-01-00
UNITES STATES HIGHWAY (USH) 41
OCONTO TO PESHTIGO
MARINETTE AND OCONTO COUNTIES, WISCONSIN

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2)(c)

By the
U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration
And
State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Cooperating Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers pursuant to 33 CFR 325

APPROVALS

Date For Federal Highway Administration

Date For Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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ABSTRACT

USH 41 is a Principal Arterial highway providing a vital north-south transportation link between southeastern Wisconsin and Michigan. The entire USH 41 corridor is designated as a backbone highway under WisDOT's Corridors 2020 plan designed to provide a network of high quality highways connecting all regions of the State to each other and to the national system of interstate and other multi-lane highways. USH 41 also provides connections to major east-west highways in north central Wisconsin, regional service to economic centers and tourism resources, and local service to communities along the corridor. The approximate 21-mile (34-kilometer) segment between the cities of Oconto and Peshtigo is the final link in the USH 41 corridor proposed for capacity improvements. In Design Year 2027, traffic is expected to increase by a range of 36-51 percent and includes 17 percent heavy trucks in the USH 41 segment between the cities of Oconto and Peshtigo. Present and projected traffic exceeds the traffic volume threshold at which a 4-lane divided highway is needed to provide Level of Service (LOS) C at 4.0 or higher for a Corridors 2020 backbone highway. Numerous access points and the high truck volumes also affect traffic flow and safety. Crash data for 1998 through 2002 indicates the total crash and injury rates in Oconto and Peshtigo were above statewide average rates. The fatal crash rates between Oconto and Peshtigo and in the City of Peshtigo were also above statewide average rates. As traffic increases, safety and operational characteristics will continue to deteriorate. The EIS evaluates the social, environmental, and economic impacts of the proposed improvements that include widening the existing highway to a 4-lane divided facility between Oconto and Peshtigo and bypasses around these communities.

National Environmental Policy Act Statement

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4332) requires that all federal agencies prepare a detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major federal actions that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is therefore required to prepare an EIS for proposals funded under its authority if such proposals are determined to be major actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

The EIS process is carried out in two stages. The **Draft EIS** is circulated for review by federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, and made available to the public. The Draft EIS must be made available to the public at least 15 days before the public hearing, and no later than the first public hearing notice. A minimum 45-day comment period is provided from the date the Draft EIS availability notice is published in the Federal Register. WisDOT must receive agency and public comments on or before the date listed on the front cover of the Draft EIS unless a time extension is requested and WisDOT grants the time extension. After the Draft EIS comment period has elapsed, work may begin on the Final EIS.

The **Final EIS** includes the following:

1. Identification of the recommended course of action (alternative), and the basis for its recommendation.
2. Basic content of the Draft EIS along with any changes, updated information, or additional information as a result of agency and public review.
3. Summary and disposition of substantive comments on social, economic, environmental, and engineering aspects resulting from the public hearing/public comment period and agency comments on the Draft EIS.
4. Resolution of environmental issues and documentation of compliance with applicable environmental laws and related requirements.

Final administrative action by FHWA (Record of Decision) cannot occur sooner than 90 days after filing the *Draft* EIS, or 30 days after filing the *Final* EIS with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Both the Draft and Final EIS are full-disclosure documents that provide descriptions of the proposed action, the affected environment, alternatives considered, and an analysis of the expected beneficial or adverse environmental effects.

General Reviewer Information

Major topics are divided into sections, each with a separate page-numbering sequence. Exhibits pertaining to each section are located at the end of the section to minimize disruption of the narrative discussions.

Roadway dimensions, distances, and other measurements such as wetland acreage are expressed in both English and metric units (metric units in parentheses).

In order to keep the EIS as concise as possible, lengthy technical reports and other supporting documents are summarized and referenced as being available upon request.